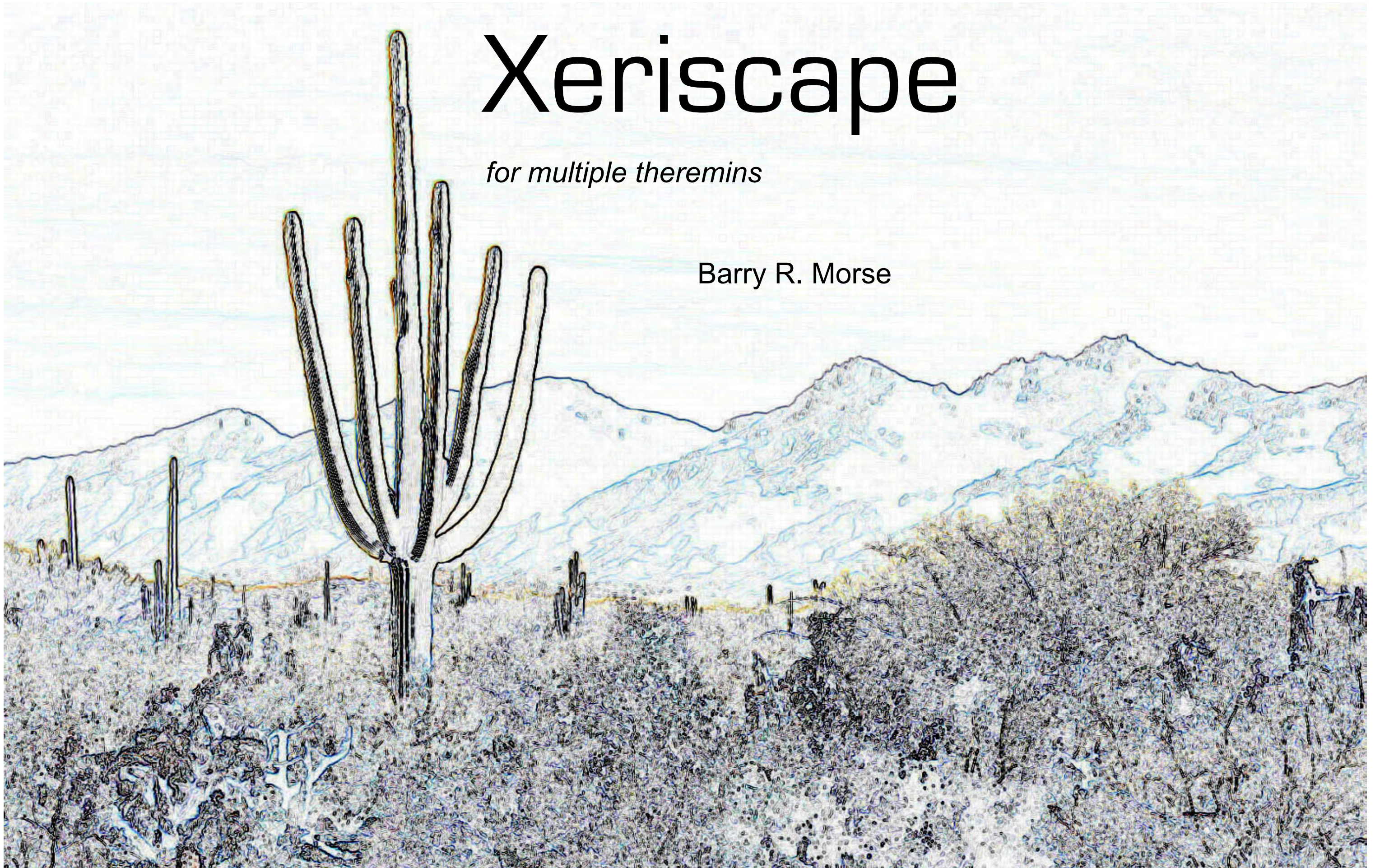


Xeriscape

for multiple theremins

Barry R. Morse



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May 30, 2005 Tucson, Arizona

Xeriscape is the first in a series of pieces with expanding musical ideas and resources. Each successive composition is an organic out-growth of the previous piece, yet each remains an independent work.

Instrumentation

Xeriscape is scored for multiple theremins **which** should be used whenever possible (which is rare), at least 4 in number; however, *several trombones, at least 4) is an acceptable substitute*. Also, amplified strings (violin, cello, etc.) or any combination of the above would do. Slide whistles would be viable except for the unfortunate association with “silly” musical effects.

Score

All players read from copies of the score. All players read the same music and perform it independently of each other and the conductor (except where simultaneous attacks, and meter, etc. are involved). **Pitch:** Each “staff” is divided into a high “H”, medium “M” and low “L” pitch range. Notes or events within a pitch range can be thought of as being “relatively” high or “relatively” low depending upon where within the pitch range zone it is notated and is interpreted by each player. This will naturally lead to a great diversity of pitch interpretation (and interesting chords!) for the same notated part. **Rhythm:** The score alternates between non-metrical events lasting a certain number of seconds and metrical events with the beat corresponding to the second. Conductor is free to vary the metrical beat for greater expression, but seconds tick along as they are. Each individual player determines for him/ herself where within the time frame an event occurs and for how long. As the score uses proportional notation in the non-metrical sections there should be *relative* agreement, but exact precision is undesirable. By listening carefully to each other a certain amount of unity with micro-polyphonic texture should be achieved.

Form

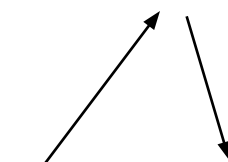
Xeriscape is in ABA form and based on seven performance techniques: 1. long glissandi; 2. wavering pitch; 3. random staccato pitches; 4. “tuneless” melody; 5. sustained pitches; 6. “loopy” gestures; and 7. silence, almost pointlessly corresponding to the seven principles of desert landscape design or “xeriscape”.

Rehearsal letters correspond to these techniques; thus A1 primarily features glissandi (which should be heard as the lead), A2’s primary focus should be the agitated wavering of the theremins, etc. Note: there is no A4 “tuneless melody”: this was reserved for the B section. The B section runs through the seven techniques in order with elaboration. Thus B1 also features glissandi but to a larger extent. The seventh technique “silence” is subtly used in part B to help create staggered entrances. A’ is a much condensed and more chaotic recapitulation of A. The seven musical elements of volume, pitch range, duration, direction, articulation, tempo, and depth (emphasis) are used arbitrarily. These sections and techniques are expanded and developed further in *Xeriscape 2 for multiple theremins and multiple percussion* and *Xeriscape 3 for multiple theremins, multiple percussion and concert band*.

Duration

c. 3’ 00”

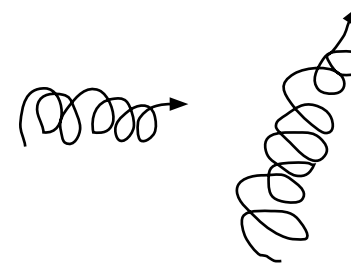
Notation



glissandi; direct ascent/ descent
(no “noodling”)



very rapid, wide wavering (tremolo)
between indeterminate pitches
approximately determined by width
of graphic



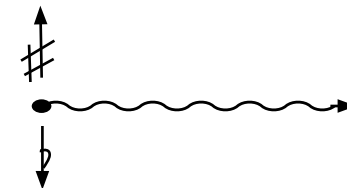
“loopy” gestures; very rapid “noodling” around an indeterminate pitch or following general rise or fall of indication; thereminists use rapid circular hand gestures



isolated pitch, staccato



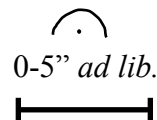
sustained pitches held until next note



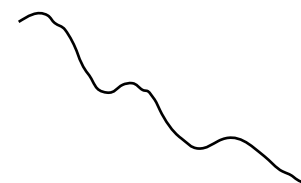
slow quarter tone wavering (1/4 tone sharp to 1/4 tone flat)



senza misura, non-metered; use timing in seconds and proportional notation to determine events



each player waits between 0” and 5” to enter independently of other players



improvised “tuneless melody” following melodic contour

(A1) ♩ = 60 (A2) *senza misura* 15" (A3) 10"

H
M
L

2

mf \triangle *f* *sffz* \triangle *poco a poco dim...* *ppp* *p* *poco a poco cresc...* \triangle *ff*

=

(A5) no vib. 15" (A6) 10"

H
M
L

3

p \triangleleft *mp* \triangleright *sim.* *p* \triangleleft *mf* \triangleright *p* \triangleleft *f* \triangleright *p* \triangleleft *ff* \triangleright *p* \triangleleft *mf* *p* \triangleleft *mf* *p* \triangleleft *mf* *p* \triangleleft *ff*

A7

♩ = 60

B1

senza misura

10"

B2

15"

H

M

L

3

—

X

0-5" ad lib.

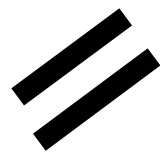
no vib.

pp

0-5" ad lib.

ppp

no vib.



B3

20"

B4

15"

H

M

L

0-5" ad lib.

p

0-5" ad lib.

mp

molto espressivo

molto vib.

ad lib.

2

(B5) ♩ = 60 *tempo rubato*

H													
M	2		1	<i>sim.</i>	2		3		2		1		4
L													

f *mp* *p* *mf* *mp* *p* *ff*

choose any pitch any range, no vib., hold length of bar, change each time



(B6) 10" **(A'1)** ♩ = 60

H												
M	X								3			
L												

0-5" *ad lib.*

mf *f*

